

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein degrading the image comprises reducing the size of the image.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein degrading the image comprises decreasing resolution of the image.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein determining whether the user is inactive further comprises determining whether a certain period of time has elapsed.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the certain period of time begins when the image was last refreshed.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the certain period of time begins when the image was last sent to the user's system.

28-29. (Canceled)

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein determining whether the user is inactive further comprises determining whether the user is using the user's system.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein determining whether the user is inactive further comprises determining whether a screen saver has been activated on the user's system.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein determining whether the user is active or inactive is performed periodically.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, further comprising:
increasing the quality of the degraded image to produce a less-degraded image upon a determination that the user is active; and
sending the less-degraded image to the user's system.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein refreshing the image is performed more frequently than determining whether to degrade the image.

35-38. (Canceled)

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein determining whether to degrade the image further comprises determining whether a certain period of time has elapsed, wherein the certain period of time begins upon a determination that the user is inactive.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, further comprising:
increasing the quality of the degraded image to produce a less-degraded image upon a determination that the user is active; and
sending the less-degraded image to the user's system.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein the network is the Internet.

42. (Canceled)

43. (Currently Amended) A method for displaying an image from a camera on a user's

system, the method comprising:

executing, by a processor, at a site remote from the user's system, the

steps of:

sending the image to the user's system via a network;

refreshing the image periodically according to a refresh frequency rate;

and

maintaining a counter of a number of refreshes that have occurred and a

timer of a refresh time since the last image refresh, the refresh

frequency rate being evaluated based on the counter and the timer;

determining whether the user is inactive, ~~the user being inactive when a~~

~~window containing the image is visually obstructed on the user's~~

~~system and whether to refresh the image based on a value of the~~

~~timer and the refresh frequency rate, and incrementing the counter~~

~~when the image is refreshed;~~

adjusting image parameters over a period of time to produce a degraded

~~image in response to a determination that the user is inactive, the~~

~~degradation of the image increasing exponentially over the period~~

~~of time to achieve a fully degraded image;~~

periodically sending the degraded image, during the period of time, to the

user's system via the network when the refresh frequency indicates

~~a time for an image refresh, and updating the counter to reflect the occurrence of an image refresh;~~

re-evaluating the refresh frequency rate when the counter reaches a preset threshold value, wherein the re-evaluation of the refresh frequency rate causes the rate to increase, decrease, or completely stop refreshing of the image; and
increasing quality of the degraded image upon receiving a user request to improve the quality of the degraded image.

44-45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, further comprising determining whether the user has provided any input into the user's system.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 43, wherein the image is captured at a first location, wherein the user is located at a second location, wherein the first location is remote from the second location, wherein the user's system is configured to display the image.

48-52. (Canceled)

53. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, perform a method for displaying an image from a camera on a user's system, the method of comprising:

 sending the image to the user's system via a network;

 refreshing the image periodically according to a refresh frequency rate;

 and

 maintaining a counter of a number of refreshes that have occurred and a timer of a refresh time since the last image refresh, the refresh frequency rate being evaluated based on the counter and the timer;

 determining whether the user is inactive, ~~the user being inactive when a window containing the image is visually obstructed on the user's system and whether to refresh the image based on a value of the timer and the refresh frequency rate, and incrementing the counter when the image is refreshed;~~

 adjusting image parameters over a period of time to produce a degraded image in response to a determination that the user is inactive, ~~the degradation of the image increasing exponentially over the period of time to achieve a fully degraded image;~~

 periodically sending the degraded image, during the period of time, to the user's system via the network when the refresh frequency indicates a time for an image refresh, ~~and updating the counter to reflect the occurrence of an image refresh;~~

re-evaluating the refresh frequency rate when the counter reaches a preset threshold value, wherein the re-evaluation of the refresh frequency rate causes the rate to increase, decrease, or completely stop refreshing of the image; and

increasing quality of the degraded image upon receiving a user request to improve the quality of the degraded image.